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LETTERS  
OF  
MOMMUS,

FROM MARGATE;

DESCRIBING

The most distinguished CHARACTERS there;

AND

The VIRTUES, VICES and FOLLIES  
to which they gave occasion,

IN WHAT WAS CALLED THE

SEASON

Of the Year 1777.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR JOHN SELL, NEAR BISTER-EXCHANGE,  
IN THE STRAND.

MDCCLXXVII.

E. E. T. E. R. 2

OF

M. O. M. U. N. I. T. Y.

FROM MARGATE

*Handwritten mark*

PROCESSED

The most difficult thing I have ever done

A. C. G.

The Virtues and Vices

TO THE



IN THE

S. E. A. S. C. H. O. O. L.

OF THE YEAR

PRINTED BY

A. D. 1800

PRINTED FOR THE

BY

...

P R E F A C E.

**T**HE editor of these papers has collected them from the St. James's Chronicle; into which the author seems to have negligently thrown them. The spirit and design with which they seem to have been written appear to be very commendable; and the letters highly deserving the little trouble and expence of snatching them from oblivion. They hold up very salutary lessons to the motley groups which croud our bathing-places; and it were well, if men of genius and talents would employ their leisure hours like our author, in restraining the vices and follies of such places; in chastising opulent insolence; and awing the licentious into apparent decency.

Every

## P R E F A C E.

Every enquiry for the author at the printer's, &c. has hitherto been in vain. He must therefore excuse the editor for not paying him the compliment of asking leave, as well as for some little liberties which have been taken in correcting errors evidently occasioned by haste.



## LETTER L

MARGATE, SEPT. 1, 1777.

S I R,

**I**T is become the fashion for your correspondents, among other people of fashion and fortune, to resort in the summer to the bathing-places. I have been at this place a few days; and I mean to amuse myself, and perhaps your readers, with any thing material which may occur to me. Places, like persons, necessarily assume a character, and individuals in a place are like qualities in an individual; they have the same effect, and they combine in the same manner to form the general character. The company at Brighthelmstone consists of persons who are analogous to the qualities of a man of fashion; pride of birth and rank, united with ignorance and knavery; expence without taste; dissipation without pleasure; freedom without politeness, and gallantry without love, are the qualities which

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give

give a character of fashion to Brighthelmstone. Margate is furnished with dispositions of a humbler cast ; such as might enter into the composition of a country squire, or rather a city alderman. Pride of riches united with sufficient ignorance ; expence and dissipation without taste or pleasure ; reserve and distance without importance and dignity ; and a very little debauchery, gallantry, or love.

I have fixed on this as the place where to spend the remainder of my summer. I go to the rooms, where an insipid, and almost a fashionable, dullness prevails, in order to indulge my humour for contemplation. This is seldom interrupted, unless it be by some peculiar manœuvre of the master of the ceremonies, who has a strange predilection for haberdashers, mantua-makers, and milliners, and takes every opportunity of setting them above the wife or daughter of a merchant who hath left off trade ; of a quack-doctor ; of a dentist ; of a Lincoln's-Inn lawyer ; of a doctor in divinity, or a member of parliament. This sets the whole room, like Cox's Museum, in motion, and I have an opportunity of seeing the mechanism and structure of all its particular parts. I may send you an account

account of the principal figures, when I have taken them accurately.

A ray of hope dawned on us last week, and promised those of us, who knew not what to do with themselves, or what to think about, something to wonder and talk of for some time. In the anxious and corroding silence of the card-room an invalid coughed in a note like that of a pig; the astonishment it occasioned made the man ashamed to own his infirmity. Some referred it to evil spirits, and the clergy were desired to go home for their prayer-books, or to speak Latin, *which they declined*; and being reduced to difficulties, they started the supposition that the noise was made by a ventriloquist. When this word was explained, the curiosity of the ladies was infinite, to know how the sound was emitted; the place was alive with expectations of wonders from this performer---but neither the sound, nor the author of it, was ever heard of more.

The play-house is much on the plan of your theatres in London, and in another letter I may give you an account of our Margate Roscius. As Roscius's are now springing up like mushrooms, you may let Mr. Garrick

know *from me* (and I am sure he will take my word) that his reputation and fame is full as much in danger of being eclipsed by the Margate Roscius as by any other Roscius whatsoever. You will think so when I describe him. As an instance of the manager's judgment, which I desire you will communicate to Mr. Colman, even before your paper goes to the press, I must tell you that the play-house is built over a stable, in order to give a peculiar effect to that striking part in Richard the Third, where he calls out "A horse, a horse---a kingdom for a horse." I cannot describe to you the amazing effect produced by the peculiar manner of the actor, and the combustion among the grooms and horses. I mean to write a tragedy on the story of Darius's horse; to pay a principal attention to this circumstance, as you do in London to closets, trap-doors, and screens; and to bring it on at Margate.

I am, &c.

M O M U S.

LETTER

## LETTER II.

CHURCH-FIELD, at MARGATE, SEPT. 6.

S I R,

I Have given, in my first letter, only a general description of this place. English benevolence will not be satisfied with general descriptions. It is become so prevailing and powerful a principle in all ranks and conditions, as almost to border on vice, and to become love of scandal. No man now liveth for himself; and almost all his anxiety and concern is for his neighbours. Hence that disposition, not only to pry into the secrets of families, and the wily intrigues of love, while the busy world is in town; but that insatiable curiosity to know how they are employed in the country; and the manner in which they recruit their constitutions, and exercise, and whet up their passions and appetites for future business. While this principle is kept within the bounds of innocence and decency, the St. James's Chronicle ~~will~~ *will* be its instrument; when it becomes ribaldry



and scandal, there may be other dirty vehicles better suited for its conveyance.

I mean, therefore, in describing Margate, to tell as much truth as I can come at; and where I am left to imagination, contrary to the common rule of writers, to suppose only good. The law, before it decides on paltry property, or on a miserable life, requires positive proofs. Scandal, to decide on reputation, which is dearer than any property, or any life, always gives its most important and fatal decisions from appearances and suppositions. There may be intrigues, and sentimental friendships, and even attachments forming here, but I have yet no evidence of them; and I had rather let two guilty persons escape, than be the means of bringing one innocent and amiable person to infamy and wretchedness.

You must know then, Sir, that this place as a place of amusement, consists of a large hotel, containing an assembly-room, &c. &c. and boarding-houses, lodgings, circulating-libraries, and male and female coffee-houses.

No man of fortune is ever taught to *live*; and what is called the art of living is truly



a method of killing time. I except any one who may have risen to the capacity of gaming. If gaming be not a virtue, or an amusement, it requires talents and attention : we have therefore not many who game. Bathing, sauntering, raffling, reading the play-bills in the newspapers ; giving the appearance of intrigue and love to a tête-à-tête on dogs and cats, and caps and feathers, and getting ready to stare at one another, and to create a general and inarticulate clatter at the rooms in the evening, is our general employment.

Before I come to persons, let me describe to you the places we occupy. The building which contains the rooms, &c. is upon a large, simple and elegant plan ; but so slight that it looks like a temporary one, and wants the necessary appearance of solidity and weight. The business of it, in its various branches, is well conducted, not excepting that of master of the ceremonies, whose only fault may be charged upon nature. Every man has not Nash's intuitive faculty of discerning the various gradations in the tinges of patrician and plebian blood. Nash was a Welchman, and a Welchman is generally ignorant of every thing but blood. I could furnish Mr. W----r with

with a principle in this matter : " Men and women, as they approach to quality (and we have not many people of high fashion here) move farther and farther from that point of true decency and politeness which are to be found only in middle life. The two extremes of very rich and very poor are equally indecent and vulgar, and are only differently dressed."

The lodgings here are on the footing of lodgings in other places ; but the boarding-houses are mostly kept by *maidens*, verily and truly such, I believe in my conscience. The reason of this I take to be---that as a family mingled by chance, like Epicurus's jumble, is apt to generate unions, nothing can so effectually guard against improper ones, as the daily and nightly watchings of a maiden, verging towards the vale of hopelessness. Excepting this circumstance, many of those houses are on a good footing : that which I now inhabit is in what they call the Church-field : the house itself, and its situation, are charming, and the lady who presides in it, is of an attentive and accommodating disposition.

These boarding-houses, besides many other conveniencies, produce a peculiar species of gallantry

gallantry which is truly innocent, and is amusing to those who have cool and dispassionate hearts. There is a general ambition of being noticed and admired, and a comical contention among the ladies to obtain sentimental attendants in their walks; dangles at their pleasure; apparent or real admirers, and partners at the rooms. This furnishes a good deal of bustle and business, and keeps the houses alive. I have tried to enter into these matters as far as my infirmities would permit; and I have one day gallanted a simpering girl, narrowly watched by her mother; and the next exchanged her for a widow, who has stood the business of many seasons; whom I might take any where without danger; and kiss to eternity without stirring a particle of her blood.

The only circumstance, besides a scarcity of books, that distinguishes the circulating libraries is, that the shops are made use of to raffle and smuggle, and not to read.

The female coffee-houses do not furnish, as they might, their share to our amusement. We want some fair disciples of Mrs. Millar, who would lead the way in giving tea, attracting the gentlemen by articulate and intelligible

ble conversation, and daring to fit in company with pretty eyes, sometimes fixed on a book or a paper.

I am, Sir, &c.

MOMUS.

P. S. In my next you shall know *who* are here.

LETTER

## LETTER III.

MARGATE, SEPT. 13.

S I R,

**T**HE company here is divided, as usual, into people of fashion; people of fortune and of genteel professions; and a rabble, consisting, as it may happen, of rich and poor.

Those few who have birth and rank to value themselves upon, being in general destitute of other claims to respect, shut themselves up, on the principles of eastern princes, that familiarity may breed contempt; and that to be often seen is to be despised. Instead therefore of resorting to a good set of rooms, and assisting to give spirit and elegance to our public amusements, they crowd together in select parties in small apartments, and wholly separate themselves from the company. The consequence of this is, that our gentry, legitimate and illegitimate, take their place, and affect the airs of fashion. Demi-reps recently



cently *made honest women*; equivocal appearances, who may be wives or may be mistresses, run into the first stations, and are on a level with the lady of a country gentleman, or of that peculiar species of beings in London who are made gentlemen by a legacy or a lottery-ticket. These persons giving themselves the airs of fashion, and keeping aloof in the rooms; the dances, &c. are thrown into the hands of a rabble; and, in spite of the genius, taste, and authority of the master of the ceremonies, are the strangest scenes of confusion, and even blackguardism, you have ever beheld.

The ladies, as usual, contend for that defective and fatal object---public admiration; and put in their claims to it by beauty and dress. But the taste for those accomplishments is capricious; and they are often cruelly obliged to accommodate themselves to its variations. The whim it has now taken is to prefer raw-boned, scraggy, but very young girls. There is a sickness in the glutted and debauched stomachs of our gentlemen, which will take in nothing but chickens from the egg shell, ducklings, and green geese. In this article we are in the fashion at Margate. The present toast of our wretched beaus is a Mrs.

R—;



R — ; formed on the model of Scotch beauty, with large ill-set limbs, a long waist, high cheek bones, and the vermillion of her countenance and her lips tinged with yellow : but she is very young, very fair, wears her hair very oddly, and is admired ; while the real beauties of the place, with faces formed on the truly female model, animated with intelligence, modesty, and love, are neglected and overlooked.

There are others who *would* be attended to, but cannot obtain attention. Among these is a very remarkable character ; a Mrs. Coniac, widow of a brandy merchant, whose usual place of residence and scandal is Kensington. This comely, staring, assured woman, had like to have had the reputation of an affair with me. She often darted her fierce looks at me with what she deemed familiarity ; brushed me in passing ; whispered in my hearing, that her husband had been a low-bred, provoking, disgusting fumbler ; and would have bullied me into some notice of her, if on my first approach I had not been deterred by her breath ; which a poet would say, is like a zephyr loaded with the fumes of a distillery, and by a cadaverous exhalation from her skin, which very offensively put me in mind of mortality. I consulted my friend Ch---ll on

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the

the cause of this phenomenon ; and Ch-----if for once philosophised. I found that the same cause which gave a fierce fieriness to her features, and a peculiar malignity to her tattling and scandal, was the habit of tasting her late husband's commodities ; which had fixed on her a disorder similar to the property of a horse-LEECH ; for all the blood she sucks from the hearts of her fortunate or unfortunate acquaintance, passes by means of that disorder either thro' her pores or in the manner of that voracious and detestable animal. She is accompanied by a young lady, whom her father on quitting England, has been imprudent enough to leave among Mrs. Coniac's acquaintance. With a person which would be genteel, if not made too much like a kitchen tongs ; with a face which would be passable but for the enormity of its nose ; with a middling understanding bloated with pride, and with original sensibility depraved into lasciviousness, this lady aspires to the rank of beauty, and to the honours of a toast. But early signs and symptoms giving her apprehensions of disappointment, she is the echo of the malicious widow ; and they are very diligent in their endeavours to depreciate the beauty and tarnish the reputation of others. Repeated mortifications will fow them into *saints*, and make them

them proper disciples of that mirror of holiness Sir H. Trelawney.

It would be profaneness to contrast trifling objects of this kind, with one who honours this town with her residence; whose beauty is ennobled by her virtues; of whom even scandal is silent, and in whose praise the wise and good are unanimous and warm; or with another, of whose person and the mind which animates it, I can give you no idea. Raphael's finest drawings are harsh to the lines of real beauty which define her neck, her bosom, her waist, her limbs. Her face you will not suppose for the admiration of a modern beau, when I tell you, the features, and especially the eyes, have been formed, disposed, and harmonised by good sense, and an infinite succession of the most natural, tender, and lively affections. If these affections had not been sometimes misplaced, disappointed, and given an impression of regret, timidity, suspicion, and mysterious reserve to her heart, and to her countenance, she would have rivalled the Venus de Medicis; and Wedgwood and Bentley would have sent their copyists in crowds to contemplate that truly Greek and truly natural beauty from a living model, which they so happily imitate from busts, and gems, and vases. But I must not trust myself on this subject, which I find to be caviare to the mul-

*titude* of high and low people at Margate. And I will not point out to the stare of ignorance, or the appetite of lust, what should hardly be contemplated ; what certainly should be possessed only by a man of a cultivated mind and of the warmest and most affectionate heart.

After this I can only tell you, that the ladies in general have various degrees of beauty down to deformity ; and are dressed in a variety of tastes down to tawdriness and absurdity, of which I could give you no particular account in a letter.

The gentlemen I must pass before you in classes ; the first of which being nobility and gentry, and consisting only of a few tattling, gossiping card players, I shall not produce.

The next consists of divines ; almost all characters ; from the holy sprig of jessamy, which the officiating clergyman stuck up here, when he set out to study the customs and manners of France, to the contemplative and profound curate of St. Anne, who having vanquished Dr. Hind in a contention for the rights of the most useful division of the clergy, and held him up as a warning to priests, and as an  
object

object of pity or contempt to the people, has retired with his intelligent and faithful *Pompey*, to his favourite amusement ; and it is to be hoped, is recruiting his health, spirits and resolution, for the future terror of oppressors, and for the benefit of injured industry and merit.

In this class, or rather in the remove from it, I am under the necessity of placing that divine who is no divine, that religionist who is of no known and acknowledged religion, that priest of nature, and minister of deism whom your correspondent Sappho seems to pursue with the rancour of disappointed love. But as his health appears to be declining, as he seems not to wish to be considered of the company, and is a brother writer, I may as well be silent of him. I only thought he would very properly terminate the view of a small group of divines, as deism and irreligion are the usual limits and boundaries of all the religions in the world.

Lawyers next succeed---with whom this place swarms. Whether washing in the sea be a religious rite, or a physical prescription for the vices and maladies incident to that profession, I cannot take upon me to determine.



A counsel is distinguished from an attorney by a peculiar strut, by an apparent attention to an imaginary tail, even when he has not his gown on, and by a harsh and emphatic pronounciation, suited only to Westminster-Hall. But for these little circumstances M-nsf---d would be an entertaining and agreeable man ; as would B---rcr---ft, if he had a little more understanding, and a much less opinion of it. There is a sneaking suspiciousness in almost all the attornies, and they have a habit of contracting their muscles for concealment and chicane, which perhaps electricity would be more effectual for than salt-water, and might spread out and smooth their surfaces into an honest and manly appearance.

But physie is the favourite profession here. We have doctors and surgeons and apothecaries employed here in every way, and it would fill up your paper to give you a history of physie at Margate ; my indisposition has furnished me with numerous anecdotes ; one of which I will give you as a specimen.

My disorder had demurred to the proceedings of the faculty here, and the lady abbess of our convent entreated me to have Mr. Ch--ch-l ; who, she said, was the pleasantest  
doctor



doctor in the world, and was treated here as such, though he might be only a manager of clyster-pipes and pestles and mortars in London. I love pleasant things, and sent for Ch-rch-ll, as much on account of his brother, as on the recommendation of my virgin governess. But judge of my surprise when I learned that I could not see him that day, on account of one of his offices, as deputy-manager of an ass race. It seems the highest diversion of the turf here is furnished by asses for fame; wenches for shifts, pigs for peaches, under the direction of Mr. C——ll, who has a deputation for this purpose from the well-known Mr. G-dfr-y, because he laughs at certain periods with more hilarity, and is supposed to inherit from his family more jokes and merry sayings than other people.

When the fat, burlesque, unthinking figure presented itself before me; it is true, as my governess had told me, I felt pleasantly; and was inclined to laugh from sympathy, because I saw it was what he meant to do, after cracking his jest. I humoured him on account of his brother whom I much loved; slid over my case, as I intended to make no use of him, and launched into his jests. I

found him in wit, exactly what I am in fortune; the second son of a wealthy house, whose brother had run away with the estate. I am cruelly expected to appear as a gentleman, because my brother has a fortune, and has left me only the gleanings of our personal property; and Ch-rch-M is as cruelly obliged to affect to be a wit, because his brother was one, and to furnish miserable jokes, from the family shreds and tatters. A similarity of fate has created a sort of friendship between us, and we seldom play our evening rubbers afunder.

These are the principal professional characters at Margate. There are several straggling ones, which are curious enough; and some of which I may possibly send you, if I should not get better subjects to write upon, when I am able to make my excursions.

Yours, &c.

MOMUS.

LETTER

## LETTER IV.

S I R,

I Doubt my gambols will be soon over at Margate. My correspondence with you has excited an universal ferment in every breast here, from that of the sublime, easy, and elegant Mr. W-----r, down to the bathing women, who all read the St. James's Chronicle with great eagerness and fury.

Various are the conjectures about the author, and droll the menaces on his being discovered. Almost all are afraid, and therefore almost all agree that he is an assassin, who diverts himself in murdering reputations, and in disturbing the quiet of those who are come here to amuse themselves. I have not meddled with real reputations; I play only with shadows; and the devil must be in me to murder them.

Ch--ch-ill affects to laugh while he mutters curses against me; but I have given him his  
 potion,

potion, meaning he should taste of what he has often given others, and be taught to think before he speaks. It diverts me to see a man accustomed to delight himself in viewing others roasted alive, grieved to the heart at being only finged with a paper.

The lawyers vow my total destruction if you can be bribed to bring me into Westminster-Hall; and what is singular, the most inveterate against me is not any of those whom I have taken notice of, but a heavy-headed counsellor, whom I had neglected, because nobody could tell me his name.

The ladies bounce and break into a horse-laugh at my taste for beauty, and bid me seek my Greek forms and expressive countenances where I please, they will go on distorting themselves with high cushions, false curls, false tails, high shoulders, and painted cheeks.

But my most formidable enemies are aged c-ck-lds, and the convenient gallants who are like appendixes and supplements in their families. In a groupe of these I had like to have been demolished lately. A deadly blow was aimed at me by a wretch who in the  
black

black hole at Calcutta assumed the form of a *buffalo*, gored the heart of a confidential friend, and escaped to be exhibited in Westminster-Hall: his horns would have reached me but for the officiousness of his assistant, a lottery-office-keeper, a man of fashion at the watering-places, and a dealer and *chapman* in tickets and shares of tickets in the city. This poor wretch fearing I should hang him up to ridicule (for he has got from my servants all the pence and shillings they could procure or pilfer) and eager to shew his valour in good company, and in the dark, thrust his head between me and the buffalo, and received his horns without damage; for his mother having taken the model of his pate from the mop with which she usually washed her house, he may either have horns or receive thrusts from them, without any apparent inconvenience.

These buffles and dangers, and the discovery that I was the god of roguery in disguise, has obliged me to change my habitation, and I am now in a temple of sentimental friendship, called a boarding-house, under the direction of a widow---and a virgin. Here all is method and order and delicacy. I dare not peep in the morning to call for a bottle of water, with slippers on; without buttons in  
my

my sleeves, or without my garters. The virgin observes, and the widow is the disciplinarian, I hope they will never discover I am not a *man*; for the mayor of Dover's deputy, and the only magistrate here, serves them with small beer; the whole neighbourhood consists of methodists, and they will hasten with inquisitorial alacrity to perch a poor heathen god in a pillory.

I mean, therefore, in my next, to write wholly on the fair and pleasant side, and to tell you when you become a man of fashion (and it is what all successful printers must come to) on what accounts you may spend your time very agreeably at Margate.

I am, Sir, &c.

MOMUS.

LETTER.



## LETTER V.

MARGATE, SEPT. 28.

S I R,

I Have often been astonished at the extensive capacity and learning of a man in your situation. The printer of a newspaper is addressed, and appealed to on all subjects, and, no doubt, is a competent judge of all. I need not therefore tell a man of your learning, that Momus has ever been as remarkable for his variableness and inconsistency as any woman that ever existed. This is the reason of my quitting the rocky and dangerous road of satire, for the even and pleasing path of praise. It is my humour so to do; and I am not intimidated by menaces of being called to an account by a gentleman, or way-laid by a laced and embroidered black-guard. All the occasional men of fashion, pawnbrokers, lottery-office-keepers, and thief-takers, who have left off business, are sent out as scouts after me; while I am sat down

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as

as peaceably and securely as a poet on the plains of Arcadia, tuning my reed to the music of love, and softening my voice to the notes of panegyrick. "Hail, Flattery! enchanting goddess of delusion! at thy shrine all beings bend! and in thy religion alone there is no heresy! thou workest incontestible miracles and reconcilest the most direct contradictions! thou givest wisdom to the simple, virtue to the knave, and beauty to the ugly! all blessings are bestowed by thee, without even the trouble of deserving them!"

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You see, Sir, like all great writers, I have invoked a muse. But I plead benefit of divinity, and I will not engage to be always constant to my mistress.

You cannot easily imagine a sweeter spot than that on which this strange place is dropt; only you must dispense with shady groves and purling streams; for there is hardly a tree to be seen, nor a drop of sweet water ever to be tasted. The soil is also chalky, and none but eagles can look at it. Allowing for these exceptions, you may consider Margate as a pleasant place. It is almost central to a great number of little villages, which are in nearly the circumference  
of

of a circle, which were originally the habitation of farmers and their dependants, but are now the receptacles of contraband goods. Indeed the whole isle of Thanet exhibits only a general jumble of lawless confusion; every thing is conducted by trick, and law and gospel are dispensed by smuggling. "If I should ever assume the person and station of king of England, I would learn to govern the isle of Thanet before I thought of conquering America."

These villages, Sir, seem to be built on purpose to terminate our views, and to give variety and interest to our rides and walks. I hate descriptions, or I would tire you. Take this as a specimen: *King's-Gate* is at the distance of a few miles, where the late Lord H——d spent prodigious sums of money, and those whom he employed shewed great taste. The house is in a good style for the situation, on a steep and naked shore; the ruins are for the most part well imagined; but the whole affected me, as almost all great objects on earth do. I regretted that virtue had never been so prosperous as to rear edifices and spread lawns, and that the original owner and possessor of so pleasing a spot had not been an honest man.

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When

When I have taken these rides, and refreshed myself, as mortals do, at the orderly table of my boarding-house, I repair to the circulating libraries, and there find the means either of being introduced into private parties, or of joining company for the rooms. Mr. Silver and Mr. Hall, presidents of these gambling, gossiping places, men of extraordinary geniuses in their way, and the only persons in Margate who are in the secret of these letters, give me such masterly hints and sketches of all who pass before me, that I can not only get into any houses, but into any bedchambers and closets of any houses in Margate, and that by managing the foibles of those who have the keys of them.

You will believe me when you know, that without the risque and infamy of *Clodius*, and without even changing my sex, I am admitted into Millenium Hall, the grave and wise president of which is here attended by some of the chaste sisters of that institution, to purge and check the peccant desires, and to purify their bodies in salt water. This lady is allied to Mrs. Montague, famous among the pamphleteers, and monthly subscribers, for assaulting

faulting Voltaire, as a gnat would be among its kindred for taking a lion by the nose.

Millenium Hall is not yet a perfect institution, for the members of it have not the self-denial and generosity to throw their fortunes into a general stock, and quit their several habitations for a common one. It now consists of a circle of neutral beings, with the outward parts of women cast in a masculine mould. They are therefore universally destitute of female beauty, softness, and amiableness, and they are as harsh and unpleasant in their minds, as they are ordinary in their forms. You are not to wonder, therefore, that they consist of wives parted from their husbands, and old maids who never could get any. Their distinguishing principle is rancour against the men; and their employment reading, writing, praying, and a little charity to the poor. Judge what pleasure I must have in contemplating such excrescences in human nature, especially as you must suppose me passing from such a society to that of the woman I love, who has retained the female loveliness both of body and mind, unaccompanied by its usual weaknesses and affectations; who has genius without vanity, knowledge without pedantry, and whose natural and



exquisite beauty is rendered interesting by a feeling and affectionate heart. Here the pleasure arises from contrast, as it does in another society into which I am admitted, and which is called a female academy for notability and sentiment, under the direction of the late Dr. H--kf---th's widow, a little round contented figure, who is too unwieldy to be notable, and whose sentimental apparatus, if she ever had any, has been long since buried in plumpness.

She contrives, however, by tales and novels and histories, united to a system of family management, to give her nymphs that singular modern character distinguished by the epithet *sentimental*, which manages the family by rule; spends and exhausts the natural affections on romantic and imaginary subjects, and which leaves nothing for a husband but an enervated and overstrained mind, insensible to all common and useful attachments.

These are objects of curious speculation to one who contemplates human nature as I do, and *Margate* always offers such things to observation.

When

When I am not thus engaged, I go to the play, or I partake of the several amusements at the Hotel, the business of which, as far as it depends upon *Smith*, could not well be better conducted. And if the master of the ceremonies were a man of sense, knowledge of the world, and real politeness, this place would soon rival, and perhaps excel the first bathing-places in England.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

M O M U S.

THE

THE valour and fury (consisting of male and female clamours) against *Momus* subsiding; consultations were held on the best means to defend the reputations of those who had none, against the satire and ridicule which he scattered about him. Mr. Walker, *master of ceremonies*, and a man as eminent for his wisdom as for his easy politeness, presided at these meetings of alarmed c-ck-lds, their fawning *agents* and wanton wives, of superannuated military beaus, of divines, lawyers, and hair-dressers. Great was the hubbub of these assemblies; at last a half-pay, half-witted colonel proposed, that all thoughts of force might be dropped, and that he and his nephew, assisted by two or three beaus, might fall on him in the dark. This was thought too dangerous, as the author was apprised of the nature of their courage, and shewed himself disposed to sport with it. Colonel *Raboo*; the young squire *Brainless*; his eastern greatness the *Buffalo*, and the maccaroni rabble of brokers, attornies and gamblers, were advised to the safer method of calling after him when almost out.

out of hearing, and then to take to their heels. To assist these military measures, it was proposed to look out for some able writer, and to repel the insults of this alarming satyrist. Colonel Yahoo offered himself; but owned that spelling had been a fatal branch of learning to the family. If it had depended on oratory or bullying, particularly when men advanced in years and hating broils and quarrels were to be insulted, all the governors of the M---dl---x hospital would testify that no man should have been his rival.\* After many claims, pretensions and debates, it was agreed, that some man, eminent for his learning and talents, should be applied to; and should be complimented for his courage in entering the lists with the title of *Defender of the Customs and Practices of Margate*. This produced the following letter.

\* This cream-faced Bobadil is famous for waving his cane, in an *equivocal* way, over the heads of tradesmen, or of gentlemen in years and of such dispositions and such characters in the world as may insure his safety. All his orations at the M-----x hospital are distinguished by these cowardly circumstances, which may be insults, or may be rhetorical flourishes; just as he is called upon. See his character more fully explained in the last letter, signed an Insulted Woman.

LETTER

## LETTER VI.

To M O M U S.

MARGATE, SEPT. 30.

S I R,

**I**F it be your delight to destroy that security and repose which are essential to the pleasure of a place like this, or to know that the bare mention of your name excites terror and apprehension, your enjoyment must be exquisite in the effect of your letters from Margate. But I have no idea of a disposition that can be pleased with such malicious gratifications, or that any writer of your abilities can be tempted to prostitute his talents to so base a purpose. I shall rather suppose vanity to be your motive, than malice; for your descriptions are more witty than just, and your characters like the production of a painter, who is more solicitous to make a fine picture than a good likeness.

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I very much approve the general plan of your correspondence with Mr. Baldwin, am pleased with the liveliness of your colouring, and would chearfully give my vote to elect you perpetual censor of Margate. For the impertinent airs of gentility, the ridiculous consequence assumed by London tradesmen, and the endless follies which are here common to men of all ranks and professions are proper subjects for the pen of satire. But the innocent peculiarities of a pretty woman are sacred; and the characters which can defy censure, should be suffered to escape the shafts of ridicule. Margate, like every other public place, is frequented by grotesque women, trifling fops, and designing sharpers, who are fair objects of public ridicule, contempt, or indignation; these, if you will scribble, may give full exercise to your wit, and afford sufficient variety for a weekly Momus, without touching the reputation of a virtuous woman, disturbing the peace of a worthy family, or giving pain to a well-disposed and honest heart. Private scandal is properly understood to be the malicious efforts of envy, or the artful resource of hypocrisy; but wounds inflicted by the hand of genius are mortal, and the blood which flows from them taints every thing it touches with infamy.

my. Nothing therefore can excuse a public writer, who exhibits characters without that attentive enquiry and authentic information which should always precede the public executions of satire. If you would blame the judge, who from a slight suspicion should condemn a wretched culprit to the gallows; the satyr-ist who wantonly exposes characters to infamy or ridicule, upon false and imperfect information, will, with equal justice, be the object of your censure. Yet this must certainly be the case with every man who engages in the undertaking which you have chosen for your amusement: for the company which resort to Margate, being collected from every part of the kingdom, are in general strangers to, and consequently unable to communicate the secret history of each other: and their stay here is commonly too short, even for the penetration of Momus to discover their real characters. Your descriptions therefore being sketched from imagination, or the fallible rules of physiognomy, should certainly be left to the sagacity of your readers, without the assistance of initials: for by avoiding any particular application, you will amuse without offence, and in the true character of Momus, may divert yourself, like a mischievous boy, with throwing squibs and crackers amongst the multitude.

You may suspect, perhaps, that my observations upon your letters are occasioned by an intimacy or connexion with those you have made the victims of your satire; but they are as little known to me as yourself, and I have no motive, but that benevolence and compassion, without which the abilities of Momus are a curse. I hold your mischievous endeavours too cheap, to apprehend from them any serious consequence, either to myself or my friends; for you have disenthralled yourself to the small degree of credit, which the retailers of scandal too easily obtain from the weak and the credulous.

You confess, that an ill state of health hath prevented your mixing with the company, or partaking in the amusements of the place; but you might have spared this confession, for it is very evident, that you are unacquainted both with one and the other; and I think it more than probable, that your descriptions were conceived at your garret in St. Giles's, than in Church-Field, or the Parade at Margate.

Whilst a general disposition to civility and politeness, and a mutual inclination to please

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and to be pleased, are the first principles of pleasure in societies of temporary retirement from the fatigues of business; or whilst the most elegant accommodations, recommended by a situation the most delightful, are objects of preference, the genius of Margate will prevail, and crowded assemblies proclaim her triumph. To as little purpose is your malice levelled at Mr. Walker; for the same assiduity and attention to please, the same readiness to oblige, and the same taste and judgment which have procured him general approbation and applause for years past; will ensure to him the same satisfaction for years to come. The brilliant appearance at his annual ball, the liberality of his subscribers, and the signal marks of respect, which he receives both in public and private, are such arguments in his favour, as neither Momus, his printer, or the devil can gainsay or resist.

ANTI-MOMUS.

LETTER

## LETTER VII.

To M O M U S.

*"Odinus accipitrem quia semper vivit in arvis."*

S I R,

**I** Am rejoiced to hear of your intended retreat from Margate, and I doubt not it will be matter of sincere pleasure to many.

For some time I have beheld with astonishment, private reputation tortured by the hands of an unfeeling misanthrope, under the title of a ridiculous figure of antiquity.

The satirist who strikes at vice in general is deserving of applause; but the wretch who, without distinction, presents his artillery against private foibles, merits a reception from society of another kind.

The good and amiable man, when he perceives a fault in his companion, would admonish in the closet, or pass over the transgression.



tion. The haughty temper of the cynick casts forth his venom to the world, regardless of the consequence.

A person, Sir of your disposition, must either be a very bad or very odd man, characters universally marked with abhorrence or contempt.

This language is too moderate perhaps for a person so distinguished in wit as Momus is ; but you should remember that moderation, when heated, is by far more dangerous than the passion of a moment ; it has the fire without the flash.

These few lines I have written as a preamble ; you shall shortly receive a more ample favour.\*

I am, yours, &c.

PHILOPAS.

\* This favour has not been received ; or it may have been of so wretched a kind that the printer would not insert it.

LETTER

## LETTER VIII.

MARGATE, OCT. 5.

S I R,

I Have been this week so much engaged in contemplating the fruits of my own amorous labours, that I have not given much attention to the events of the place. What is extremely singular in my present case is, that though I am not myself given to making verses, and my mistresses have been mostly what they call guides, who are beings here of an amphibious kind, yet my productions have been all poets. The consequence must be, that if I were to write a Momus fit for any of the celestial bathing-places, I should not be read, while the company is so engaged with the verses of my children.

Among the most favoured of these is one I have by a handsome smooth-faced creature six feet high. She grew on the hills of Scotland, and in honour to her name and country, I have called the child Macnamolly. I intend to

• take chambers for him in Lincoln's-Inn, to give him the appearance of studying the law; but he is to make his fortune by his face;--- and a sweet one the ladies say it is! Not a thought shall ever furrow his visage, not a motion in his muscles but what is produced by the smoothest and most unmeaning smiles: he shall walk as if he were going to lie down, and he shall look so languishing, that you would think he were about to sleep. I stuck him up here as a male-beauty, and he was making great havock among those insignificant things called fine ladies, when he almost ruined his own reputation and that of his whole family, by entering into poetic partnership with a female defendant of my loins, called Miss B——. The two simpletons are both pretty, and stared at as such; but they could not be satisfied without first writing anonymous letters to themselves, and then verses to be stuck up in the circulating libraries, in praise of their beauty. Lights are set off by shades, in poetry as in painting. This my children knew; but they were unluckily in the application of the principle; for as a contrast to themselves, they satyrised the nephew of a late American governor, who seems to have brought over, and transfused into his family, a great deal of the distinguished valour  
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of that country. The young man, or young M —, you would not be able to say which, grinned and chattered at the presidents of the libraries. These gentlemen, not caring to fight with any thing, gave up poor Macnamolly, who gave up his poetic sister; at which the young American gave up his blustering, and all three were in a droll situation than any which has been conceived for a comedy these fifty years. The American, however went home for his rifle-gun, intending to do treacherously what he had not spirit to do otherwise. In the way he was met by the lieutenant of a press-gang here, who has the misfortune to be jealous of his wife, and who was then drubbing her for the pleasure he supposed she had received from a coachman. The young American, from the same innate dislike to fighting, interposed with his tongue; but the lieutenant giving him a volley of oaths and contemptuous epithets, made him take to his heels, and scramble into his bedchamber; at the window of which he chattered and made grimaces, until his fears and his malice were evaporated. So ended the adventure of my children's verses in praise of themselves.

There

There are other unlicked cubs of mine to whom I have not yet given a name. They are holding up to ridicule every large boney, plump woman, bearing any resemblance to our family, by attempting to praise her; and they are dishonouring beauty, accomplishments and virtue, by attempting to describe them.

The season here is drawing to a conclusion, and so is my correspondence with you: one letter more will finish it. The first and most active spirits of this season are either gone or going. The Buffalo has made an alarming stand against me. He has had the courage to postpone his departure for a week, to let the company see that he would not budge at the first smack of my whip; and a whelp in his train, who has repeatedly aimed to snap at my heels, I have been obliged repeatedly to kick out of the town.

My next will be an adieu, and probably very pathetic, as I seldom take leave without weeping.

Yours, &c.

MOMUS.

LETTER



## LETTER IX.

MARGATE, OCT. 12.

S I R,

I Now mean seriously to take my leave of this place; indeed partly by necessity and partly by choice.

Willing to enter into all the amusements of the neighbourhood, I took to that of shooting. Indeed my worthy friend Sir R-ch-rd S-m-n-s, who was here the last season but one, has often told me, that under pretence of one kind of game, he successfully pursued another and more delicious; and that the little girls of the isle of Thanet are as easily hit and brought down by a good shot, as its pheasants, partridges, and snipes. But this prowling beast of prey was given to boasting. I, tho' a god, found so much of a certain kind of virtue among the women, that I was obliged to betake to my gun in good earnest; and should have very agreeably broken



ken in on the formal changes of our table, if the l--d of the m-n-r had not been a kind of pedlar in civil society, who considers every thing on his estate as a commodity, and knows to a farthing what it should bring. This curious *cunning-man*, this recent Fungus, which the caprice of our late seasons hath forced up among the shoots of a noble and venerable tree, has long owed me a grudge. For one of the means by which he aimed to raise himself was fortune-hunting; and he invariably proceeded on the mean principle of quitting a lesser for a greater fortune; even pounds for guineas. He had played on the credulity of several women, when twenty thousand pounds led him to a friend of mine, whom he also quitted in pursuit of a larger sum; but to whom I suggested the following revenge. To invite his l-dsh-p to tea, and then to affect the utmost remorse and horror at being driven by a desperate passion to poison him and herself. The trick took; my l--d went home, and was put to bed. The lady also pretended to take to her bed. The gentlemen of the faculty were brought to him; and he was soundly vomited and purged. The lady instructed her servants to give out that the same practices were used on her: messages were interchanged every day, until the remedies

dies proved ineffectual to kill his lordship, and the joke came out.

I was known to be in favour with the lady; and the name of Momus has been ever since hateful to L--d C--n-ngh-m. This is the reason of the prosecution I am now under for killing a hare; and the affront of which I shall settle with his l-rdsh-p when I come to town, and in my own way.

These petty disasters, like greater evils, seldom come unattended with blessings. All the wits and geniuses in this place are in good understanding and alliance; and those who do great things, and those who say great things, are united by strong and natural ties.

*Carmen amat, quisque carmine digna gerit.*—

All the poets and players here are ever in my train, ready to transmit my wonderful actions to posterity; to turn my common sayings into blank verse; to rehearse any extempore dialogues I give them; and to eat my dinners. On my general principle of encouraging genius, I bespoke a play; and as all the people of the town and island are occupied in some contraband or illegal practice, I thought  
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the Beggar's Opera would hold up the best lessons to them.

I mustered up my acquaintance, dressed myself finely, was seated in my box, and the Margate *Roscius* in one of the most interesting adventures of Macheath---when I perceived something like a shower of strong-scented waters gently dribbling over all my clothes. I began to muse on my situation. In Heaven, we know the origin of fragrant showers, and that they are the tricks of gods and goddesses when they are floating in clouds through the regions of infinite space. I perceived, by what may be called the impregnation of this water, and the wide and scattered manner of its falling, that it came from a female; and if I had been under the canopy of Heaven, should have imagined that Venus or some of her attendants had been hinting to me, in their way, that they were passing. But here, on earth, in a play-house, covered not only by a roof, but by a gallery, where the women never part with a drop of that precious liquor, but in solemn silence and the deepest retirement--- in such a place, to be so distinguished and so blessed, was beyond my comprehension.

It

It is my custom to make all my accidents known, never to hide any thing under a bushel, but hold it as in a candlestick, that it may give either pleasure or pain to all who are about me. I instantly interrupted the performers, and exhibited myself like Hob just come out of the well. An immediate enquiry was made in the gallery; and the reason was found to be, the amazing effect of Rossius's acting, on certain parts of the women's bodies. The most universal and astonishing plaudits were given to the performer---he was ordered to proceed in unlacing and unsphync-tering the most retired and exquisite muscles of the sex---while the manager was desired to lay mats, cloths, and any spongy substances on the floor of the gallery, to prevent future accidents to the company below.

This matter has endeared me much to the ladies; for they see I am for giving the fullest scope to their sensibility; and that my wit and morality is of the indulgent, not of the severe and restraining kind. If the angelic woman I am devoted to, were not tinctured with one earthly failing, which may be called the *avarice of love*, the universal favour I am in, and the great liberties I might take,

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would

would make me defer the appointed time of introducing her in Heaven.

On Sunday next at one o'clock, I mean to make myself publickly known to those who do not, or *will* not know me. I have been promised caning, kicking, stabbing, and shooting from every fool I have exhibited, and every knave I have detected. Those who are not disposed to fulfil these promises, have this notice to take to their horses' heels.

What I have said of Margate, of its inhabitants, and its company, I will maintain, both as a man and a writer---I mean what I have obviously intended as matters of use, and matters of fact--what may be couched in allegory, metaphor, irony and transposition, I claim the usual licence of poets for; which will be allowed me by all those of my readers whose opinions I care for.

I hold all private scandal in abhorrence; and I have never hit a villain whom I might not, if I had chosen it, have totally demolished,

The place by nature, and by several of its improvements, is airy, healthy, commodious, and pleasant; but its inhabitants, up to its



first tradesmen, seem to be kneaded with smuggled dough, and look and act in every little transaction like miserable petty-larceny-men.

The company this season has greatly varied at different times ; but in general it has not much pretensions to rank, politeness, taste, harmony, or any general circumstance to make such a place happy. It is the resort of those who during the winter are immersed in the frauds of the city, and who would fly here from stinking air and a bad conscience. While I can wield a pen their flight shall not avail them. Villany is my object ; folly only my play ; and if the real friends of Margate understood its interest, they would rejoice instead of being angry at the correspondence of

MOMUS.



LETTER X.

To MOMUS, at Margate.

SIR,

I Am in the condition of most of your readers here, who have all admired your wit, till they found some inconvenience to themselves from it. That which I, and several of my sex complain of is singular, but sometimes distressing: for we are happy enough to be acquainted with men of letters. Every man who is supposed to be an author, has been suspected of writing Momus. Whether the real author of your letters has been at Margate this season or not, is a question I am far from being clear upon. I am sure, however, that the childish and cowardly marks of resentment which have been shewn at random to ingenious men, and particularly to those ladies who have been with them, are a greater reproach to the place, than any thing you have alledged against it.

In

In consequence of the notice you gave, that you would discover yourself on Sunday, those whom you have most offended, consulted on the best means of insulting you, without danger. No gentleman could therefore undertake the business, and it was consigned to the strangest being that Nature, in her freaks, ever exhibited. It was neither a *Taboo*, a *monkey*, a *baboon*, nor a *man*, but a mixture of all these, I suppose, in the course of many generations. It has the face of a baboon, but seems to have been par-boiled, or rather turned by the scurvy, to the colour of a coddled apple. This is horribly contrasted by silver locks, and legs altogether too small for a lounging ungainly body, six feet high. The whole figure, strongly marked with age, is always dressed like a boy, and without a grain of understanding, and with the voice of a castrated monkey, is eternally talking and capering.

This being, always *en militaire*, and always attended with a light-headed relation, whom he has brought here also for the scurvy, was chosen for the champion of all those who have been laughed at by Momus; and he was to call him an assassin, and a villain, the moment

moment he discovered himself, then to shew his bare br—ch, and to run away. But all this mighty heroism was defeated; this motley military man will be disappointed in his view of succeeding in the place of the master of the ceremonies, and his pretty relation in that of steward of the races.

The task now assigned these poor wretches is to snarl and grin at every one who may possibly have been Momus. No man of learning and reputed genius can go into the libraries, or pass the streets, but this coddled-faced baboon, and his young cub, provoke him by grinning and chattering; so as to molest without affronting; and then run away in a whole skin. I have felt this inconvenience; and have been often incommoded by these wretches, for they would chatter in a miserable jargon the most injurious things of the supposed Momus, and every body who associated with him; in such a manner that I might apply them to myself, but could not directly say they meant me, and therefore could not desire my company to kick or cane them away.

This, Sir is a serious inconvenience attending your not discovering yourself, marking the time of your departure, or taking some steps  
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which might prevent others, and especially women; from being incommoded on your account. As I hear you are to be at this place next year, and that your letters will be delivered in the same diverting and useful strain, I hope you will attend to these circumstances, and not think you have done enough when you have frightened away beasts of prey, without ridding us of the vermin they leave behind.

I am, Sir,

You humble servant,

*An Insulted Woman.*

F I N I S.

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